

UPDATED INFORMATIVE DIGEST

Assembly Bill (AB) 74 (Chapter 21, Statutes of 2013) made substantial changes to the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Welfare-to-Work Program requirements that were effective January 1, 2014. The CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Program is the employment and training component of CalWORKs which is funded, in part, by the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant.

Federal welfare reform enacted the TANF Program through the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996, limiting federally-funded cash aid to adult recipients to a total of five years. The intent of the Welfare-to-Work Program is to provide employment and training services to the maximum possible number of individuals within the adult CalWORKs population to aid them in achieving economic self-sufficiency within this timeframe.

These proposed regulations amend welfare-to-work regulations to comply with AB 74 by adopting expanded subsidized employment as a permitted welfare-to-work activity distinct from other forms of subsidized employment, implementing a more comprehensive appraisal and early engagement process for welfare-to-work participation, and adopting the Family Stabilization Program to assist clients in crisis.

In addition, the proposed regulations will make other technical, conforming changes, such as adding and renumbering of sections and amending cross references as necessary.

This regulatory action will establish programs and flexibility within the 24-month time period during which recipients can participate in any welfare-to-work activity they need, consistent with their assessments, to help them move to self-supporting employment. These regulations are intended to provide employment and training services to the maximum possible number of the CalWORKs population to aid them in achieving economic self-sufficiency. This regulatory action does not make changes to regulations involving worker safety or the state's environment.

The Department considered other possible related regulations in this area, and we find that these are the only regulations dealing in this subject area (CalWORKs welfare-to-work employment and training services), and therefore, the Department finds that these proposed regulations are compatible and consistent with the intent of the Legislature in adopting AB 74, as well as with existing state regulations.

These regulations were considered at the public hearing held on September 2, 2015 in Sacramento, California. Written testimony was received during the 45-day comment period and as a result, the following amendments were made to the emergency regulations:

- Section 42-711.525(b) is amended to include consideration for domestic abuse waivers in addition to domestic abuse services. The intent of this modification is to reduce confusion and ensure equitable treatment of participants across the state.

- Section 42-711.525(c) is adopted to clarify that an individual cannot be compelled to answer individual questions in the expanded and standardized appraisal. If an individual has no knowledge, or is not comfortable answering individual questions about private information during the appraisal, the individual is to still be considered compliant with program requirements.
- Section 42-711.536(c) is adopted to align the treatment of domestic abuse services as an initial engagement activity with existing regulations governing domestic abuse services. This section is intended to ensure that participants identified as needing domestic abuse services are provided those specified services.

Pursuant to Government Code section 11346.8, a 15-day renote and complete text of modifications made to the regulations were made available to the public following the public hearing. The renote period was from January 15 to February 1, 2016. There were no comments received as a result of the renote and no further amendments have been made to the regulations.